

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
North Dakota Field Office
99 23rd Avenue W, Suite A
Dickinson, ND 58601**

**Decision Record and Leasing Recommendation
Environmental Assessment DOI-BLM-MT-C030-2012-363-EA
and
Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA) DOI-BLM-MT-C030-2013-035-DNA**

Decision:

It is my decision to implement Alternative C (the Preferred Alternative) as identified in the North Dakota Field Office (NDFO) Oil and Gas Leasing Environmental Assessment (EA), DOI-BLM-MT-C030-2012-363-EA, in which 28 of 29 parcels containing approximately 2,903 acres of federal minerals would be offered for lease at the at the January 29, 2013 competitive sale. Competitive leases will be issued for parcels sold at the sale, and non-competitive leases may be issued for applications filed during the 2-year period following the sale. The remaining 1 parcel considered in the EA containing approximately 40 acres in whole or part would be deferred due to its location within priority sage-grouse habitat, and is pending further review.

It is my decision to implement the findings in the DNA which offers two (2) parcels containing approximately 134 acres of federal minerals for lease at the at the January 29, 2013 competitive sale.

Authorities:

The authority for this decision is contained in 43 CFR 3100.

Compliance:

Should the parcels be developed, monitoring may be required and would be addressed and analyzed under future NEPA documentation.

Terms, Conditions, and Stipulations:

For all parcels, standard terms and conditions, as well as the lease notices and stipulations identified by parcel in Appendix A of the EA, would apply and be attached to the lease parcel(s).

Plan Conformance and Consistency:

The proposed action and alternatives have been reviewed and found to be in conformance with the following BLM plans and associated Record of Decision(s): North Dakota RMP (April 1988) and its associated Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), the governing land use plan for the NDFO.

Alternatives Considered:

Alternative A – No Action. The No Action Alternative would exclude all 29 parcels within the NDFO from the lease sale. Surface management would remain the same and ongoing oil and gas development would continue on surrounding federal, private, and state leases.

Alternative B – Proposed Action. The proposed action would offer all 29 parcels of federal minerals, covering approximately 2,943 acres for competitive and/or noncompetitive lease issuance, in conformance with the land use planning decisions. The lease parcel number, size, and detailed locations and associated stipulations are listed in Appendix A of the EA. Standard terms and conditions, as well as stipulations identified in Appendix A of the EA would apply.

Alternative C – BLM Preferred Alternative. The preferred alternative would be to offer 28 of 29 parcels containing approximately 2,903 acres of federal minerals for competitive and/or noncompetitive lease issuance. The lease parcels to be offered are located within the NDFO and are dispersed across the following counties: Burke, Dunn, McKenzie, Mountrail, Stark and Williams. Standard terms and conditions, as well as stipulations identified in Appendix A of the EA would apply.

The preferred alternative would defer a total of 1 lease parcel in whole or part (approximately 40 acres of federal minerals) from the upcoming lease sale. More specifically, the 1 lease parcel is located within priority sage-grouse habitat and is pending further review.

Public Comments:

The EA was made available for a 30-day public comment period which ended on September 25, 2012. No substantive comments were received during or after the 30-day comment period from the public. The EA which covers the proposed action outlined in the DNA is DOI-BLM-MT-C030-2011-0079-EA which was made available for a 30-day public comment period which ended on March 31, 2011. No substantive comments were received during or after the 30-day comment period from the public.

Rationale for the Decision:

The decision to approve Alternative C, the preferred alternative, is based on the following: 1) consistency with resource management and land use plans; 2) national policy; 3) agency statutory requirements; 4) relevant resource issues; and 5) application of measures to avoid or minimize environmental impacts.

1. The decision is in conformance with the North Dakota RMP (April 1988) and its associated Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), the governing land use plan for the NDFO.
2. It is the policy of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) as derived from various laws, including the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, as amended [30 U.S.C. 181 *et seq.*] and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, to make mineral resources available for disposal and to encourage development of mineral resources to meet national, regional, and local needs.

3. The decision is consistent with all federal, state, and county authorizing actions required for implementation of the Preferred Alternative.
4. Standard terms and conditions as well as special stipulations would apply. Lease stipulations (as required by Title 43 Code of Federal Regulations 3101.1-3) were added to each parcel as identified by the NDFO to address site specific resource concerns or new information not identified in the planning process.

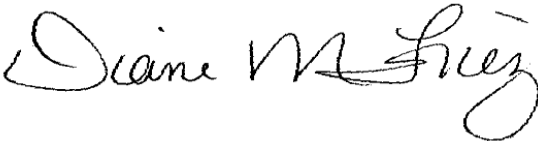
Recommended by:



Donato J. Judice, Acting Field Manager

Date: January 7, 2013

Concurrence by:



Diane M. Friez, District Manager

Date: January 8, 2013

Approved by:



Theresa M. Hanley, Deputy State Director, Division of Resources

Date: January 28, 2013